Parkinson's Disease Fact Sheet

CIRM funds many projects seeking to better understand Parkinson's disease and to translate those discoveries into new therapies.

Description

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disease that affects approximately a million people in the United States and seven million people around the world. Symptoms include tremors, slow movement, muscle rigidity, balance issues and lack of facial expressions. Parkinson's disease occurs when the neurons or nerve cells in the portion of the brain that controls movement die off. These neurons send signals by releasing a chemical called dopamine, and are referred to as dopaminergic neurons. No cure exists for the disease and current medications become less effective over time.

Stem cell scientists are taking two general approaches to target Parkinson's disease. The first approach involves understanding the disease and looking for new drugs to treat it. CIRM grantees have taken skin cells from people with Parkinson's disease, reprogrammed them back to an embryonic-like state, turning them into the kind of stem cell that can be transformed into any other cell in the body, then coaxing those cells to become dopaminergic neurons that are lost to the disease. Those cells showed signs of the disease in the lab dish, and were distinctly different from the same cells created from healthy people.

Video: Progress and Promise in Developing a Cure for Parkinson's Disease

Being able to study human Parkinson's disease cells in a lab dish is a major milestone. Now, scientists can expose those cells to different drugs to find the ones that eliminate signs of the disease. If scientists find drugs that treat the disease in a lab dish, they will then test those same drugs in animal models and develop the most promising into a therapy for people with the disease. Several teams of CIRM-funded researchers are using stem cell techniques to create Parkinson's disease cells in the lab dish and then screening them for new drugs.

Other groups are creating dopamine-producing cells in the lab dish with the hope that they could replace the neurons that are damaged in people with the disease. See below for a list of a CIRM-funded projects related to Parkinson's disease.

CIRM Grants Targeting Parkinson's Disease

Researcher name	Institution	Grant Title	Grant Type	Approved funds
Susan McConnell	Stanford University	Identification and characterization of human ES-derived DA neuronal subtypes	Basic Biology I	$1,404,853
Daniel Lim	University of California, San Francisco	Development and preclinical testing of new devices for cell transplantation to the brain.	Tools and Technologies II	$1,795,891
Xianmin Zeng	Buck Institute for Age Research	Banking transplant ready dopaminergic neurons using a scalable process	Early Translational II	$4,983,013
David Schaffer	University of California, Berkeley	Engineering Defined and Scaleable Systems for Dopaminergic Neuron Differentiation of hPSCs	Tools and Technologies II	$1,340,816
Fred Gage	Salk Institute for Biological Studies	Crosstalk: Inflammation in Parkinson's disease (PD) in a humanized in vitro model	Early Translational II	$2,472,839
R. Jeremy Nichols	Parkinson's Institute	Understanding the role of LRRK2 in iPSC cell models of Parkinson's Disease	Basic Biology III	$1,482,822
Zhuohua Zhang	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	Derivation of Parkinson's Disease Coded-Stem Cells (PD-SCs)	New Cell Lines	$1,556,448
Stuart Lipton	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	hESC-derived NPCs Programmed with MEF2C for Cell Transplantation in Parkinson's Disease	Disease Team Therapy Planning I	$96,448
Su Guo	University of California, San Francisco	Identifying small molecules that stimulate the differentiation of hESCs into dopamine-producing neurons	SEED Grant	$542,619
Marcel Daadi	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	Neural Stem Cell-Based Therapy For Parkinson's Disease	Disease Team Therapy Planning I	$63,952
Susan McConnell	Stanford University	Optimization of guidance response in human embryonic stem cell derived midbrain dopaminergic neurons in development and disease	SEED Grant	$607,363
Steven Finkbeiner	Gladstone Institutes	Common molecular mechanisms in neurodegenerative diseases using patient based iPSC neurons	Basic Biology IV	$1,482,025
Zhuohua Zhang	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	Modeling Parkinson's Disease Using Human Embryonic Stem Cells	SEED Grant	$701,060
Xinnan Wang	Stanford University	Misregulated Mitophagy in Parkinsonian Neurodegeneration	Basic Biology V	$1,174,943
Stuart Lipton	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	MEF2C-Directed Neurogenesis From Human Embryonic Stem Cells	Comprehensive Grant	$2,832,000

David Schaffer	University of California, Berkeley	Engineered Biomaterials for Scalable Manufacturing and High Viability Implantation of hPSC-Derived Cells to Treat Neurodegenerative Disease	Tools and Technologies III	$1,239,276	
Arnold Kriegstein	University of California, San Francisco	Derivation of Inhibitory Nerve Cells from Human Embryonic Stem Cells	Comprehensive Grant	$2,410,874	
Jeanne Loring	Scripps Research Institute	Autologous cell therapy for Parkinson's disease using iPSC-derived DA neurons	Quest - Discovery Stage Research Projects	$2,354,226	
Fred Gage	Salk Institute for Biological Studies	Molecular and Cellular Transitions from ES Cells to Mature Functioning Human Neurons	Comprehensive Grant	$2,749,293	
Birgitt Schuele	Parkinson's Institute	CRISPR/dCas9 mutant targeting SNCA promoter for downregulation of alpha-synuclein expression as a novel therapeutic approach for Parkinson's disease	Quest - Discovery Stage Research Projects	$1,931,495	
J. William Langston	Parkinson's Institute	Using patient-specific iPSC derived dopaminergic neurons to overcome a major bottleneck in Parkinson's disease research and drug discovery	Early Translational I	$3,698,646	
Justin Cooper-White	Scaled Biolabs Inc.	A tool for rapid development of clinical-grade protocols for dopaminergic neuronal differentiation of Parkinson's Disease patient-derived iPSCs	Quest - Discovery Stage Research Projects	$657,528	
Evan Snyder	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	Developmental Candidates for Cell-Based Therapies for Parkinson's Disease (PD)	Early Translational I	$5,190,752	
Vicki Nienaber	Zenobia Therapeutics	A new phenotypic screening platform that identifies biologically-relevant targets and lead compounds for the treatment of Parkinson's disease	Inception - Discovery Stage Research Projects	$150,000	
David Schaffer	University of California, Berkeley	Directed Evolution of Novel AAV Variants for Enhanced Gene Targeting in Pluripotent Human Stem Cells and Investigation of Dopaminergic Neuron Differentiation	Tools and Technologies I	$918,000	
Lei Wang	Salk Institute for Biological Studies	Genetic Encoding Novel Amino Acids in Embryonic Stem Cells for Molecular Understanding of Differentiation to Dopamine Neurons	New Faculty I	$2,587,742	
Michele Calos	Stanford University	Site-specific integration of Lmx1a, FoxA2, & Otx2 to optimize dopaminergic differentiation	Tools and Technologies II	$1,592,897	
Birgitt Schuele	Parkinson's Institute	Editing of Parkinson's disease mutation in patient-derived iPSCs by zinc-finger nucleases	Tools and Technologies II	$1,327,983	
					Total: $49,345,804.00

CIRM Parkinson's Disease Videos

Lorenz Studer, Winner of the 2017 Ogawa-Yamanaka Stem Cell Prize

Suzanne Peterson, Scripps - CIRM Stem Cell #SciencePitch

Jessica Westfall, The Parkinson's Institute - CIRM Stem Cell #SciencePitch

Jeanne Loring, Scripps - CIRM Stem Cell #SciencePitch: Parkinson's Disease

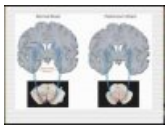
Parkinson's: Ask the Stem Cell Expert | Xianmin Zeng, Buck Institute

Greg Wasson, Parkinson's Action Network: Patient Advocate Presentation

Parkinson's Disease: Advancing Stem Cell Therapies - 2011 CIRM Grantee Meeting

Stem Cells and Parkinson's Disease

Progress and Promise in Parkinson's



Spotlight on Parkinson's Disease: Seminar by Jeff Bronstein, M.D., Ph.D.

Spotlight on Parkinson's Disease: Seminar by Arnold Kriegstein, M.D., Ph.D.

Spotlight on Parkinson's Disease: Seminar by Bruce Wisnicki

News and Information

- CIRM Stem Cellar Blog coverage on Parkinson's Disease
- Stories of Hope: Parkinson's Disease
- Are Parkinson's Disease Stem-Cell Therapies Finally Ready for Clinical Trials? It Depends, Some Say (Parkinson's News Today)

Resources

- NIH: Parkinson's Disease Information
- Find a clinical trial near you: NIH Clinical Trials database
- Parkinson's Disease Trials Listed on ClinicalTrials.gov
- National Parkinson Foundation
- American Parkinson Disease Association
- Parkinson's Disease Foundation
- Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
- The Parkinson's Institute
- Family Caregiver Alliance
- National Family Caregivers Association
- The *Movement* Disorders Society
- GForce-PD: A Global Effort to Bring Cell Based Therapies to Parkinson's Disease Patients

Find Out More:

Stem Cell FAQ | Stem Cell Videos | What We Fund

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